ARA #3
People's Temple

EXCISE

File
People Temple

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY John Simms DATE 2-27-81
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

693

SUBJECT : PEOPLE'S TEMPLE LAWYER MARK LANE'S PRESS CONFERENCE

REF:

We have reported media accounts of the visit of American lawyer Mark Lane to Guyana "on behalf of the Citizens Commission of Enquiry" to look into allegations being made about the People's Temple in the U.S. A member of the local staff of the People's Temple Georgetown office, [redacted] introduced Mr. Lane to E B6 DCM at a chance meeting at a local hotel September 20. DCM observed that he had heard Mr. Lane speak on The People's Temple regular weekly broadcast the evening before (previously taped) and had heard as well that he had given a press conference the evening before. Mr. Lane simply acknowledged the introduction.

2. The same evening, Mr. Lane left word with the Marine Security Guard at the Embassy that he would like to speak with DCM. The latter returned the call to the People's Temple and was informed by [redacted] that Mr. Lane had had to leave for the airport E B6 but had left a message for the DCM. As best she could read Mr. Lane's handwriting, [redacted] said that the message was that E B6 Bishop Jones and the People's Temple are "just trying to build a cooperative community. We did not say that we're on a platform speaking against the U.S.... We haven't even said that the conspiracy went as high as the Government."

3. The following day, Sept. 21 [redacted] of the People's Temple, E B6 called DCM to say that Mr. Lane had missed his flight and wished to

to request an appointment for the next day which was then set at 0800. At 0815 September 22 [redacted] again called DCM to say that Lane had decided not to visit Embassy. [redacted] said that he, [redacted] had been informed by "very senior PNC members" (i.e., members of the ruling Peoples' National Congress) that the U.S. Embassy had managed to prevent publication of reports of the press interview in the "Chronicle." When Lane was informed of this, according to [redacted] Lane was "just disgusted" and no longer wished appointment. [redacted] said that purpose of Lane's visit was to have corrected possible misunderstanding of message telephoned to DCM to emphasize that no accusations were being leveled against the Embassy (as distinct from the USG, apparently), but that this no longer was so. DCM replied that appointment had been requested by Lane, that DCM was available to meet with him, but that as he had other things to do would appreciate some advance notice of cancellation of appointments. With regard to allegations that the U.S. Embassy had intervened with the "Chronicle" or others to obstruct publication of a report in the "Chronicle" on the September 21 news conference they were simply untrue. [redacted] said that he did not mean to imply that the DCM personally had been responsible, but that unspecified "others" at the Embassy were responsible. DCM replied that he spoke for whole Embassy and that those spreading reports to the contrary were spreading falsehoods.

4. About mid-morning "Chronicle" appeared (later than usual) with four column piece in favored center section with article reported by message. DCM called [redacted] and enquired if he had

seen "Chronicle" article. [redacted] replied that he had, but that E BC article was not taken from press conference but from interview that publisher of "Chronicle" had set up, and did not include central points of press conference. In response to DCM's enquiry regarding these points, [redacted] said that Lane had effectively E BC given the lie to such calumnies as that Jonestown was surrounded by barbed wire and had also discussed such incidents as the alleged September (1977) sniper fire on Jonestown "which missed Jim Jones by two inches," and that "Caucasians in military dress had been seen around the perimeter" (presumably at the same time). Thus the People's Temple continued to feel that reporting of the news conference was suppressed (although [redacted] alleged it had E BC appeared "everywhere else" in the Caribbean) and continued to believe that the Embassy had managed its suppression.

5. Subsequently, Embassy contacts in the news media stated that the article which appeared in the "Chronicle" on September 22 had been scheduled for publication in the Sunday, September 24 edition, but that it had been decided to publish it earlier due to direct and indirect pressure from Lane and the People's Temple. This was stated as the reason for the late appearance of the "Chronicle" of September 22.